

About the SOPA: Information for Families

The Student Oral Proficiency Assessment, or SOPA, assesses the speaking and listening proficiency of young language learners. SOPA ratings are based on the 2012 ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines, which are widely used to evaluate language skills in U.S. schools.

What is the design of the SOPA?

During the SOPA, a trained administrator assesses two students at a time by conducting a friendly and conversational interview in the language your student is learning. For each pair of students, the assessment takes about 15 to 20 minutes.

The SOPA is made up of tasks that are appropriate and engaging for learners from PreK-8 and the sequence of tasks is adjusted based on student levels. It begins with an easy activity that students can complete successfully, increases gradually in difficulty to check their highest levels of proficiency, then ends with an activity at their comfort level.

How are SOPA results used?

Results from the SOPA include ratings in both speaking and listening and notes on student performance. Teachers and language programs can use SOPA results to:

- place students into appropriate classes,
- assess what students can do with the language at the end of a unit or class,
- inform curriculum development, language teaching, and grading,
- evaluate the effectiveness of the program, and
- communicate with families about students' strengths and challenges.

How can I help my learner prepare for the SOPA?

The SOPA is designed to allow students to say as much as they can and show what they can really do in the language. You can help students prepare for the SOPA by giving them chances to use the language inside and outside of the classroom. Students find the SOPA to be a fun activity that involves interacting with teachers and classmates, and it does not require any test practice.